

ANC Government not serious about protecting environment, mineral rights or private property

By Annerie Weber MP – DA Member of Parliament's Portfolio Committee for Environment, Fisheries and Forestry

In March 2019, 16 fossil fuel power stations from Eskom applied for postponement and suspension of compliance with the Minimum Emissions Standard time frames, which should have been effective from 1 April 2020. In March this year this process was still not concluded. These fossil fuel power stations had 5 years to reduce their toxic air pollution moving towards the Minimum Emission Standards but there were no reductions.

After two failed attempts by two previous ministers, Minister Creecy successfully gazetted the doubling of the SO₂ standard in March 2020 from 500 mg/Nm³ to 1000 mg/Nm³.

Could the reason for this be that South Africa now have to hand in their Nationally Determined Contributions? By doubling the standard of SO₂, the country might look good, as the percentage of air pollution will seem to have decreased. If this is the case, South Africans will believe that they are successfully winning the fight against air pollution, but it is only Government pulling a veil over their eyes.

How serious is the Government in fighting for people's lives and the protection of our environment?

In October 2019 an illegal mine popped up at a farm in Mpumalanga. It destroyed a registered Wetland. The mine was covered under water in December due to rain, and the toxic polluted water ran into the drinking water of the surrounded farms and towns. This, while the Department of Water gave the mining company a directive making it clear that they cannot mine there.

On 21 February 2020 Minister Mantashe published a list of valid permits and licences as an answer to a question in Parliament and the name of this mining company was not there. A questionable permit, no consultation, no public participation, no environmental management plan (EMP) and an environmental impact assessment (EIA) copy and pasted from various other EIAs. Is this the new land grab plan?

This farmer and the environment have been completely failed by the Government's unwillingness to apply the rule of law.

In these cases, the failure of the ANC state has been laid bare: The environment has not been protected; the mineral rights system has been shown to be in shambles and private property has been shown to not be safe.